

Working to ensure our Veterans have the care they deserve, President Obama today signed H.R.1016, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009. The bill was co-sponsored by Rep. Debbie Halvorson, the only representative from Illinois on the House Veterans Affairs Committee. The President was joined by Rep. Halvorson and other members of Congress in the White House for the signing.

"Our veterans work so hard for us, we need to make sure we're working for them," said Halvorson. "This is extraordinarily important legislation that will provide much-needed resources to the VA. It will ensure our nation's veterans medical facilities have the right staff, the most advanced equipment, and provide the best care possible. No veteran should ever again be denied health care because our VA doesn't have the resources to support them."

The bipartisan bill, introduced this February by House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51), will provide funding for the VA one year in advance, allowing the department which provided care to almost 5.5 million people last year to operate more efficiently and effectively. Over the past 20 years, the VA only received its budget three times prior to the start of the new fiscal year, which led to degradations in the quality of health care for Veterans.